



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Chris Abele, Civic Leaders Call on State to Avoid Massive Transit Cuts, Treat Milwaukee Workers Fairly

Business, Education, Civic Leaders Call for New Transportation Fund Revenue to be used for Transit

MILWAUKEE – County Executive Chris Abele this morning joined a group of Milwaukee area business and civic leaders to call on the Joint Finance Committee to not unfairly penalize Milwaukee County taxpayers and restore transit funding to Milwaukee County, the economic engine of Wisconsin.

“Transit is a key jobs and economic development tool that helps residents get to work and get the education they need so they can get a job,” said Abele. “Cutting transit funding will only further undercut our ability to compete in a modern economy, and harm our residents who need more transit options with gas prices near record highs.”

[The letter](#), signed jointly by Abele, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, MMAC President Tim Sheehy, Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent Greg Thornton and UWM Chancellor Mike Lovell, asks that the Joint Committee on Finance, which will take up transit issues this week, restore the unprecedented 10 percent cuts to local transit aid currently in Gov. Scott Walker's proposed state budget.

Offsetting the proposed \$7 million in annual cuts to Milwaukee County would require a 29 percent fare increase or an 8 percent service reduction, according to one study.

[A May 3 study by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau](#) found that the Transportation Fund will have an unexpected \$27 million in additional revenue over the next budget cycle – nearly double the funding it would take to eliminate the proposed local transit cuts statewide in the next budget.

The letter also calls for keeping transit funding within the transportation fund rather than diverting it to the general fund. The current state budget, which moves transit funding to the general fund, will make it harder to protect transit funding from being used for other purposes.

And the letter calls for ensuring that Milwaukee County taxpayers won't have their tax dollars sent to unfairly subsidize other transit systems when the Southeast Regional Transit Authority is dissolved. The current state budget will terminate SERTA and split \$1.27 million in SERTA funding equally between Milwaukee County and Kenosha and Racine, despite a study showing that most of the tax revenue that created the funding came from within Milwaukee County.

[Read Abele's prior letter to Senator Darling and Rep. Vos on the RTA issue here.](#)

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